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Introduction to POROI 11.2

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Introduction to POROI 11.2

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As the two-term rhetorical presidency of Barack Obama nears its end, *POROI* 11.2 offers rhetorical assessments of three of his speeches.

James A. McVey, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, attends carefully to the rhetoric of the visual projections that accompanied Obama's 2011 State of the Union message. He finds its audience being hailed as compliant neo-liberal subjects by a rhetoric of sullen nostalgia that is not as stark in the text of the address itself.

M. Karen Walker, Independent Scholar, finds hegemonic assumptions about Western science and technology in President Obama's "New Beginning" speech at Cairo University on June 4, 2009. The speech launched the Cairo Agenda, a program of action in education, science, technology designed to build trust between Muslim-majority countries and the United States. It committed the Administration to enhanced science diplomacy programs. Walker shows how Muslim science diplomats have been quick to identify the offensive assumptions of their Western partners, but have responded to them by constructing a reflective, value-oriented public sphere that operates to the side of its official counterpart.

Obama's 2007 Sermon in Selma, Alabama on the anniversary of that city's 1965 Bloody Sunday is the subject of Jason R. Moyer's, Malone University, essay. He finds Obama attempting to finesse the difference between the civic-religious *topoi* of Martin Luther King's early rhetoric and the *Exodus*-based liberationist rhetoric of African-American religious discourse. Moyer explains how the distinction Obama drew at Selma between the Moses and Joshua generation of black Americans was designed to effect harmony between these discourses, but favors the integrationist rhetoric of American civil religion.

POROI 11.2 also contains a five-part, multi-authored "conversation among scholars" about how the recent Ebola epidemic was constructed in and by the American press and politicians. In a many-faceted study of what might be called

discursive hysteria, issues considered range from potentially counter-productive calls for a vaccine to constraints on the personal liberty of non-infected caregivers. The authors of this innovative study are Jennifer L. Scott, Shawnee State University; Kristin E. Kondrlik, Case Western Reserve University; Heidi Y. Lawrence, George Mason University; Susan L. Popham, University of Memphis; and Candice A. Welhausen, University of Delaware.

POROI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Rhetorical Analysis and Invention invites submissions through its web portal (ir.uiowa.edu/poroi/). The journal's stress falls on the rhetoric of knowledge production in and across academic disciplines; how knowledge flows between technical, public, and personal spheres of discourse; and how communication media affect argumentation, its dissemination, and its reception, especially as the digital revolution continues to unfold.